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SUBJECT Medical Profession in the USSR

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1. Q. Compare the status, privileges, emoluments, etc., of people in military medicine and civil medicine.

- A. Since the USSR is a police state and the ruling class, Communist Party members, are only a small minority of the total population, all personnel connected with internal and national security forces in the USSR are given special privileges and emoluments. This also holds true in respect to the field of medicine. Although people in civil medicine are all employees of the state, the Soviet Government does not consider them as vital to its survival, both in times of peace and war, as members of military medicine and, therefore, their status, privileges and pay differ greatly. The pay scale of Soviet Army medical men is more than twice that of men in civil medicine. [redacted] a top salary of 400 rubles per month by the Military Academy of Medicine at Leningrad. When, at that time, [redacted] the Soviet Army [redacted] rank of captain (Physician 3rd Grade) and was paid 850 rubles per month. In August of 1941 [redacted] a major (Physician 2nd Grade) and [redacted] increased to 1,100 rubles per month. Not only was [redacted] by almost three times that [redacted] as a doctor in civil medicine, but [redacted] many additional privileges such as free clothing, food and lodgings, free medical care, free travel on both military and public conveyances (on both personal and military business), etc.

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2. Q. Give the professional status, if any, of people engaged in dentistry.

- A. The civil and military dentists (Zubnoy Vrach), who perform extractions and fillings only, do not have a comparative social standing, salary or preferential treatment with the medical profession in the USSR. They are given four years of training as compared to five for the doctors. The dental surgeon (Stomatolog) enjoys equal standing and emoluments with physicians and his course of training is also five years.

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3. Q. What special political indoctrination, if any, is given to members of the medical profession, besides regular Communist Party history courses?
- A. No special political indoctrination was given to members of the medical profession. We were subjected to an excessive amount of political indoctrination, propaganda and agitation, along with everyone else.
4. Q. What was the actual workload of the average medical doctor?
- A. In peacetime both civil and military medical doctors were required to work eight hours a day, with the exception of those who worked around X-ray equipment. The latter were allowed to work only four hours a day. In time of war the medical doctors were on duty 24 hours a day and were, of course, required to work for as long as their services were needed. For instance, prior to [redacted] doctors and myself worked for two to three days without sleeping, until exhaustion overtook us; we would then rest for several hours and start all over again.
5. Q. Why do people become doctors? What are the rewards and what kind of people become doctors?
- A. People in the USSR certainly do not become civil doctors for the high pay, because most laborers earn far more than they do. Therefore, I would say their motivations are either humanitarian in nature, having a natural urge or calling to help others, or they desire the prestige that the medical profession offers the world over. In many cases children of men in the medical profession tend to follow their parents' profession, [redacted] Many younger men go into the profession with the specific intention of becoming military doctors in the Soviet Army, where the daily duties are less divergent and demanding and the pay and privileges are much higher than in civil medicine.
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6. Q. Are any classes of persons excluded from the medical profession?
- A. Definitely so. The sons of Kulaks, relatives of political prisoners and persons considered at all unreliable because of family background, status, class, etc, are excluded from the medical profession. In fact, such persons are not allowed to get any type of a higher education at all. It must be pointed out, however, that in 1921 "non-proletariat" family backgrounds dating back to the days of the Czar did not keep students from a higher education. Records of the "bourgeois" backgrounds of students and early offenses against the state were either lost or overlooked. More recent, later than 1930, violations and acts of a student or his family were the determining factors in keeping a student from pursuing an education in the medical field. Children of Communist Party members and the proletariat were the first to be accepted in any university, including medical academies. The next priority was given to students who were recommended by some party member or organization. If any vacancies still remained then only were students accepted on their personal merits alone.
7. Q. What are the doctors' complaints against the present system?
- A. The following are the doctors' major complaints against the present system in the USSR:
- a. Despite the fact that they are required to study for five years prior to becoming a doctor, supposedly have a certain amount of prestige and are required to uphold certain standards of living because of their position in the community, their pay is less than that of most common laborers.
- b. The fact that they are not permitted freedom of private practice and research, and the opportunity to express themselves.

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- c. Because they do not get the benefit of the research of the medical profession, both in new drugs and methods, of other countries. They are not permitted to attend foreign medical conferences where there is a free exchange of ideas and findings and where they could learn of the progress being made in various fields of medical research. I believe that above all, the Soviet professional men resent the prohibition against a free exchange of ideas, the freedom to travel and the freedom to express themselves.
- d. The deeper thinking medical practitioners who practice under the Soviet system and in particular those who have observed that the theories of condition and response, which are a must in the Soviet Union, The S-R Theory which excludes or denies SIR - Stimulus Intergration Response are most distasteful to physicians who in practicing their medicine realize that something much deeper than the materialistic concepts of man exist, namely mind and spirit or soul. For that reason the deeper thinking physicians abhor a philosophical approach, based purely on matter. By virtue of the materialistic philosophy just mentioned, the Soviet state precludes the possible existence of the above immaterial concepts with the consequence that no physician is permitted to engage in practices which might in any way be interpreted (by State authorities) as falling within the realm of psychoanalysis and subsequent psychotherapy.

8. Q. Does the doctor resent limitations in the supply of facilities to patients, or does he become philosophic?

A. [redacted] never experienced any limitations in the supply of Soviet manufactured medical facilities. Since we in the medical profession knew nothing of the medical progress and new "wonder drugs" of the free world, we could not have resented not having the benefits thereof. Besides, we were constantly informed that Soviet medical progress and products were far ahead of other nations.

9. Q. Does the average doctor want to improve his services?

A. The average doctor in the USSR, as in this country, is ever studying to improve his services.

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